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EXCISE

SATURDAY
MARCH 13, 1954

To the office this morning, after buying two tin fish and a pair of plaster busts of the Duc de Ponthièvere and an unknown lady (perhaps his wife or his daughter, the Princesse de Lamballe) in Rue la Chaise.

There was a cable from Bonn which disturbed me. It seems the three High Commissioners will, on March 13, the date before the vote in the Bundesrat on the interpretative law concerning German rearmament, warn the Germans that their decision will be reviewed by the High Commissioners. This might well give an unwanted turn to the debate. I telephoned Jim Conant about it and he told me he had, with reluctance, joined in the proposed statement, which is to be held secret until after the vote, in order to forestall a more dangerous pronouncement.

[redacted]

[redacted] BI-ES

We had the Ismays, Aldriches, Dillons and John Hughes for lunch. Dillon showed me the telegram reporting his conversation with Bidault last night on American assurances. Bidault professed himself as moderately satisfied with them but will discuss them further with Doug this afternoon. As agreed, no copy of the text was left with him and, as his reading knowledge of English is far from perfect, it is somewhat doubtful how completely he absorbed the contents of the document. When the others left, John Hughes remained with me. We ruminated over what might be done to precipitate a French debate on EDC.

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About five, two two-legged and two four-legged children accompanied us to Versailles. It is cold and raining, an unwelcome change from glorious yesterday. But the little daffodils are out and birds singing.

Tommy called, then Ridge, after reading Doug's cable on his yesterday's conversation with Bidault. They are disturbed, as am I, over the haphazard time schedule or, more accurately, the lack of any definiteness, of how the French Government might fix upon a date for debate. I told them to abate their impatience and await the outcome of this afternoon's meeting. Subsequently, we will wish to talk to Doug about the matter, and also communicate with the Department. I do not like the look of things.

I like it even less, it now being dinner time and I at Versailles with E., Sasha and David. Tommy and Ridge have just telephoned me that they have read the telegram sent by Doug after his talk with Bidault at four o'clock today. It seems that Maurice Schumann and Hervé Alphand were present, so these three Frenchmen saw the text of the United States assurances. According to what they told me on the telephone, Bidault then said he would like in secrecy to show the paper to President Laniel. Anticipating this, it had been agreed that in such an event Doug or Achilles would call on Laniel, show him the paper and take it away. Instead, Dillon left the document with Bidault; the French now have possession of it, will undoubtedly translate it and keep copies, and, regardless of any vows of secrecy, it may be leaked, if precedent has any validity. If this occurs, our other NATO partners, relying on our promises to them, will be furious. Even more important, we had decided, under instructions from Washington, not to let the French have possession of the text unless they had previously set a date for debate of the EDC. I feel great sympathy for Doug. He has just returned here after almost four months of absence. He is very naive and must think that

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the French officials would not divulge a secret, especially if it might compromise him as a friendly Ambassador.

Well, there we are. Ridge has cancelled his day's snipe shooting. He and Tommy will be at Versailles tomorrow morning.

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